THE THIRD DAY.

~~27th March, 1924.~~

27th February, 1924

The Assembly met at 11-30 A. M. on Wednesday, the 27th March, 1924

Rao Bahadur R. Viraraghava Aiyangar, Officer in charge of the Administration, presided.

18. Hardship caused in the working of the Puduval Rules.

Mr. O. P. Anantanarayana Aiyar (Member, Peermade taluk) spoke about the hardship caused in the working of the Puduval Rules. The Member compared the assignments of land under the Puduval Rules with those under the rules for the sale of Government lands for coffee or tea cultivation, and said that, under the latter rules, ground value at B. Rs. 25 per acre and *thadivila* at B. Rs. 35 per acre of the wooded area were uniformly charged, besides assessment at B. Re. 1 per acre, while, under the Puduval Rules, the minimum and the maximum ground value was respectively fixed at Rs. 25 and Rs. 500 per acre, exclusive of timber value which was indiscriminately charged. He observed that, in the Peermade taluk, there was no class of trees scheduled for valuation under the rules. Further, the maximum area covered by a single application for land for tea cultivation was limited to 500 acres, while that under the Puduval Rules was only 5 acres. The ordinary peasant of Travancore went in for land only under the Puduval Rules, while the rich foreign exploiter always applied for lands under the Waste Land Rules. The Member said that such differential treatment promoted speculation in land which it was the object of the Land Assignment Regulation to prevent.

Turning next to the hardship caused in the working of the Puduval Rules, he said that that hardship lay, firstly, in the indiscriminate fixation of *tharavila* and *thadivila* due to the want of a uniform standard for fixing them, as a consequence of which the total price fixed for a particular bit of land often went beyond its actual market price. Secondly, the provisions of the Puduval Rules regulating the registry of occupied lands in the names of *bona fide* occupants and also of lands for the beneficial enjoyment of adjacent owners were often violated by the authorities. This caused great inconvenience and hardship to the applicants. The authorities, seeing that the occupied lands could not be auctioned, fixed exhorbitant rates of *tharavila*, etc., which the poor applicants could not pay. The inability to pay the rates fixed entailed the enforcement of the provisions of the Land Conservancy Regulation and the consequent relinquishment of the lands improved at much cost and labour by the applicants.

The next point touched upon by the Member was about the disposal of lands in auction under the Puduval Rules. He said that, in Peermade, people could not be expected to go up from the plains and bid for small bits of land in the Hills. It was only the poor middle class people of Peermade that could be induced to go in for such lands. In order that this might be done, he suggested that the following concessions might be accorded in the matter of assignment of lands in the Peermade taluk :—

(1) The lands selected by the people for occupation and cultivation should be assigned in their names without auction.

(2) A concessional rate of *tharavila*, say Rs. 5 or Rs. 7 per acre, might be fixed for dry lands as in the case of wet lands in Peermade, against the minimum rate of Rs. 10 per acre.

(3) The registry of lands without auction might, if necessary, be limited to 5 or 10 acres for an individual.

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(4) The lands assigned might be held free of tax for the first three years, as in the case of lands assigned under the Rules for the sale of lands for tea cultivation.

(5) The system of assigning lands without auction might be tried for a period of 5 or 7 years to begin with, the concessions being revised after that period.

He said that all the best available lands in the Peermade taluk had already been registered and that only small bits of land, here and there, unfit for tea cultivation, remained. He also stated that more than 50 per cent. of the lands auctioned under the Puduval Rules were not bid for, as bidders were not forthcoming. This caused great loss to the Government in the shape of cost of survey and travelling allowances, which could have been avoided if the lands had been assigned to the applicants without auction.

Another point referred to by the Member was the treatment of Cardamom lands in the Cardamom Hills Reserve. He suggested that such lands might either be registered or leased out as in the case of the lands in the Nagarampara Reserve or Kanni Elam tract.

In conclusion, the Member referred to the inconvenience caused to the people of Peermade in going to Devicolam in connection with the preferring of appeals. To remove this inconvenience, he suggested that either the Commissioner, Devicolam might be asked to go to Peermade to hear appeals or that his Assistant at Peermade might be authorised to do so.

President's reply.—You have referred to three points in your speech. Your first request is that the minimum rate of *tharavila* under the Puduval Rules for dry lands, *viz.*, Rs. 10 per acre, should be reduced so far as the Peermade taluk is concerned. The revised Puduval Rules in which the above minimum was fixed were issued only recently. If, after some experience of the working of these Rules, it is found that the rate is high, Government will consider the question of lessening the same.

As regards the hearing of appeals in revenue cases at Peermade, the Land Revenue Commissioner assures me that it has been the practice for the Devicolam Commissioner to hear such appeals at Peermade. If that practice has been discontinued, the Devicolam Commissioner will be asked to revive it.

In regard to the high rates of *taravila* much in excess of the minimum rates fixed in individual cases by Revenue Officers, the rules provide for appeals being preferred to the Peishkars, the Land Revenue Commissioner and the Dewan, and the Land Revene Commissioner informs me that a large number of appeals have been so preferred, and that in all cases requiring relief, relief is being afforded.

(2) FOREST.

19. Damage done by wild elephants to tea estates.

Mr. A. J. Wright (Member, Kannan Devan Hills Planters' Association) spoke on the hardships caused to the Planters by the incursions of wild elephants into the tea estates. He stated that, in spite of the representations made at the several sessions of the Assembly, their grievances in this matter still remained unredressed. Although the Forest Regulation, IX of 1097, allowed the killing and wounding of wild elephants in defence of person and property, provided that more harm was not caused to the animals than was necessary in the circumstances of the case, yet the provision did not remedy the evil to any great extent, as it had application only to cases of emergency, but not to cases of continued damages. He cited instances of such continued damages to the Pallivasal Estate, belonging to the Anglo-American Direct Tea Trading Company, where, during the past two years, cooly lines and tea plants to the value of Rs. 5,700 had been destroyed by wild elephants. With a view to remove the existing defects and to minimise such damages, the Member prayed that the Government might be pleased to issue at an early date the rules contemplated under Section 46 of the Regulation and that the planters might also be given permits allowing the killing and wounding of wild elephants in cases of continued damages. The Member in conclusion stated that such rules and permits would only conduce to the protection of forest interests by minimising the destruction of animals and that they would only be resorted to after all other possible protective measures had been exhausted.

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